

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A license issuing device for writing license information permitting use of contents in a portable license storing device, the license storing device having uniquely identifiable device ID and a function of verifying the validity of a partner device, the license issuing device comprising:

verification means for verifying the validity of a license storing device carried by a user;

means for producing license information permitting use of contents designated by the user when the license storing device carried by the user is verified as valid by the verification means; and

first encryption means for encrypting the license information produced by the means for producing license information with the device ID of the license storing device carried by the user and writing the encrypted license information in the license storing device carried by the user.

2. The license issuing device of Claim 1, wherein the license information includes contents ID for identifying the contents designated by the user.

3. The license issuing device of Claim 1, wherein the license information includes a contents use condition representing a restriction during use of the contents designated by the user.

4. The license issuing device of Claim 1, wherein the

license information includes a decryption key for decrypting the contents designated by the user.

5. The license issuing device of Claim 1, wherein the verification means includes second encryption means for encrypting the device ID of the license storing device carried by the user with a device key possessed by the license storing device carried by the user, and

the first encryption means encrypts the license information with the device ID encrypted by the second encryption means and writes the encrypted license information in the license storing device carried by the user.

6. The license issuing device of Claim 1, wherein the license issuing device is connected to the license storing device carried by the user via a network.

7. A contents reproducing device for decrypting encrypted contents and reproducing the decrypted contents,

the contents reproducing device decrypting contents based on license information stored in a portable license storing device and reproducing the decrypted contents, the license storing device having a uniquely identifiable device ID and a function of verifying the validity of a partner device, the license information having been encrypted with the device ID of the license storing device, the contents reproducing device comprising:

verification means for verifying the validity of a li-

cense storing device carried by a user;

decryption means for decrypting license information stored in the license storing device carried by the user with the device ID of the license storing device when the license storing device carried by the user is verified as valid by the verification means; and

reproduction means for decrypting encrypted contents corresponding to contents of which use is permitted in the license information obtained by the decryption means and reproducing the decrypted contents.

8. The contents reproducing device of Claim 7, wherein the license information stored in the license storing device carried by the user includes a decryption key for decrypting the contents of which use is permitted in the license information, and

the reproduction means decrypts the encrypted contents corresponding to the contents of which use is permitted in the license information with the decryption key included in the license information obtained by the decryption means.

9. The contents reproducing device of Claim 7, wherein the license information stored in the license storing device carried by the user includes contents ID for identifying the contents of which use is permitted in the license information, and

the reproduction means acquires the encrypted contents

corresponding to the contents of which use is permitted in the license information using the contents ID included in the license information obtained by the decryption means.

10. The contents reproducing device of Claim 7, further comprising accumulation means for accumulating encrypted contents, and

the reproduction means acquires the encrypted contents corresponding to the contents of which use is permitted in the license information obtained by the decryption means from the accumulation means.

11. The contents reproducing device of Claim 7, wherein the reproduction means acquires the encrypted contents corresponding to the contents of which use is permitted in the license information obtained by the decryption means via a network.

12. The contents reproducing device of Claim 7, wherein the license information stored in the license storing device carried by the user includes a contents use condition representing a restriction during use of the contents of which use is permitted in the license information, and

the reproduction means decrypts the encrypted contents corresponding to the contents of which use is permitted in the license information according to the contents use condition included in the license information obtained by the decryption means and reproduces the decrypted contents.

13. The contents reproducing device of Claim 12, further comprising:

contents use condition updating means for updating a contents use condition included in the license information
5 obtained by the decryption means after the reproduction of the contents by the reproduction means;

updated license information production means for producing updated license information including the contents use condition updated by the contents use condition updating
10 means replacing the contents use condition included in the license information obtained by the decryption means;

encryption means for encrypting the updated license information produced by the updated license information production means with the device ID of the license storing device
15 carried by the user; and

overwriting means for overwriting the license information stored in the license storing device carried by the user with the updated license information encrypted by the encryption means.

20 14. A contents reproducing device for decrypting encrypted contents and reproducing the decrypted contents,

the contents reproducing device decrypting contents based on license information stored in a portable license storing device and reproducing the decrypted contents, the
25 license storing device having a uniquely identifiable device

ID and a function of verifying the validity of a partner device, the license information having been encrypted with the device ID of the license storing device encrypted with a device key of the license storing device, the contents reproducing device comprising:

verification means for verifying the validity of a license storing device carried by a user, and, when the license storing device is verified valid, encrypting the device ID of the license storing device with the device key of the license storing device to produce the encrypted device ID;

decryption means for decrypting the license information stored in the license storing means carried by the user with the encrypted device ID produced by the verification means; and

reproduction means for decrypting encrypted contents corresponding to contents of which use is permitted in the license information obtained by the decryption means and reproducing the decrypted contents.

15. A license issuing method for writing license information permitting use of contents in a portable license storing device, the license storing device having uniquely identifiable device ID and a function of verifying the validity of a partner device, the method comprising the steps of:

verifying the validity of a license storing device carried by a user; and

when the license storing device carried by the user is verified as valid, encrypting license information permitting use of contents designated by the user with device ID of the license storing device carried by the user and writing the encrypted license information in the license storing device carried by the user.

16. A contents reproducing method for decrypting encrypted contents and reproducing the decrypted contents,

the contents reproducing method decrypting contents based on license information stored in a license storing device and reproducing the decrypted contents, the license storing device having a uniquely identifiable device ID and a function of verifying the validity of a partner device, the license information having been encrypted with the device ID of the license storing device, the method comprising the steps of:

verifying the validity of a license storing device carried by a user;

decrypting license information stored in the license storing device carried by the user with the device ID of the license storing device when the license storing device carried by the user is verified as valid in the step of verifying the validity; and

decrypting encrypted contents corresponding to contents of which use is permitted in the license information obtained

in the step of decrypting license information, and reproducing the decrypted contents.

17. The contents reproducing method of Claim 16, wherein in the step of decrypting and reproducing, encrypted contents corresponding to contents of which use is permitted in the license information obtained in the step of decrypting license information are acquired via a network.

18. The contents reproducing method of Claim 16, wherein the license information stored in the license storing device carried by the user includes a contents use condition representing a restriction during use of contents of which use is permitted in the license information, and

in the step of decrypting and reproducing, encrypted contents corresponding to contents of which use is permitted in the license information are decrypted according to the contents use condition included in the license information obtained in the step of decrypting license information, and the decrypted contents are reproduced.

19. The contents reproducing method of Claim 18, further comprising the steps of:

updating a contents use condition included in the license information obtained in the step of decrypting license information after the reproduction of the contents in the step of decrypting and reproducing;

encrypting updated license information including the

contents use condition updated in the step of updating replacing the contents use condition included in the license information obtained in the step of decrypting license information with the device ID of the license storing device carried by the user; and

overwriting the license information stored in the license storing device carried by the user with the updated license information encrypted in the step of encrypting.